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THE
AGRICULTURAL LEDGER.

1895—No. 18.

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SHEEP.

[DICTIONARY OF ECONOMIC PRODUCTS, Vol. VI., Pt. II., S. 1332.]

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SHEEP BREEDING IN THE DECCAN:

tract from Annual Report of the Office of Superintendent, Civil Veterinary Department, Bombay, for 1893-94, by VETERINARY-CAPTAIN J. W. A. MORGAN.



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E. C. BUCK,
Secretary to the Government of India.

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A small flock of breeding ewes, varying from 70 to 130 from Baluchistan, the Deccan, Rajputana, Australians, Merinos, and Siahband Rams, have been kept by me at Ahmednagar. During the past year the flock has been particularly healthy and the mortality under 2 per cent. due to the usual accidents incidental to lambing.

The average live weights of the various breeds of ewes is given below :—

Baluchistan	105 lb
Deccan	82 "
Rajputana	88 "
Merino	94 "
Siahband Rams	135 "

Comparative
ranking of
sheep.

Baluchistan.—These Sheep have rapidly acclimatized themselves to the Deccan and do not appear to suffer from the heat, or lose condition in any way. They have bred regularly strong, healthy lambs, with a fair proportion of twins. The ewes are good mothers with plenty of milk. Fat lambs, when five months old, averaged 93lb live weight, and ram lambs, eight months old, averaged 103lb. The fleece of these lambs still retains its fine woolly character, but I have noticed in one or two of the ewes, since last shearing, that the fine wool just over the shoulders, has a tendency to become hard and hairy, denoting that it is deteriorating from the effects of the climate. These sheep have good square compact carcasses, come quickly to hand, and the fat mutton, they turn out, is very rich and of a delicate flavour. The wool, though very fine and with a good staple, has been condemned by experts in England as unfit for

Baluchistan
breed.

SHEEP.	Sheep Breeding
Deccan breed.	<p>the manufacture of high class woollen materials. Average weight of fleece, 4½ lb.</p> <p><i>Deccan.</i>—These ewes were carefully selected by me in various parts of the Deccan, care being taken that they were thoroughly representative of the breed and with white fleeces. They are hardy sheep, prolific breeders, with abundance of milk and the best of mothers. The Siahband cross, on the Deccan ewes, is an undoubted success. Fat lambs bred on these lines, averaged, when five months old, 92lb live weight, and appear to inherit all the good qualities of the ram, and the hardiness of the mother. The cross brings them closer to the ground, gives them a square compact appearance, improves the quality and staple of the fleece, and practically does away with its hairy character, in addition to increasing its weight from 1 to 3lb. The tail is thick at the root and resembles the <i>Dumba</i> on a small scale. The first cross can, therefore, claim to increase the size, improve the quality of mutton, completely alter the character of the fleece, increase its weight and give to the Deccan an improved sheep, in every way hardy and capable of standing the climate, and I see no reason to prevent it being as prolific a breeder as the indigenous sheep. They come early to maturity, are good and rapid feeders and some of the ewes I have bred on these lines, are the most shapely sheep I have seen in India. Average weight of pure bred Deccan fleece is 1lb 3 oz. Average weight of fleece by Siahband cross, 3lb 1 oz.</p>
Rajputana breed.	<p><i>Rajputana.</i>—Fifty selected ewes were bought round about Jodhpur and Malwa, where the best Rajputana sheep are supposed to be bred, and brought to Ahmednagar. They took a long time to adapt themselves to the soil and climate and did not thrive. The first crop of lambs was small and ill-nourished, the mothers having little or no milk. The lambs, although kept under identically the same conditions, averaged, when five months old, only 40lb live weight, they are high on the leg, resemble the ewes, and do not appear to have inherited any of the good qualities of ram, as I cannot detect any difference in the fleece or general make and shape from the pure bred Rajputanas. The head, however, somewhat resembles the Siahband ram and there is a certain amount of thickening at the root of the tail. As far as one can judge, the violent change from sandy to black cotton soil has been more than they could stand as they are delicate sheep, shy feeders, and, I should say, quite unsuitable for this part of India, and the cross of the Siahband ram is not a judicious one.</p>
Merino breed.	<p><i>Merino.</i>—Eleven pure bred Merinos were bought from the Hunter River in Queensland. They arrived in a very poor and emaciated condition, but rapidly put on flesh and bred me a crop of lambs eight months after arriving in the country. Here, again, the influence of the ram is most marked, the lamb taking on nearly all his characteristics. The fleece is completely changed from the compact close curled wool of the Merino to a soft silky straight fleece resembling a mixture of the two breeds. The head and the shoulders resemble the ram and the tail is a <i>Dumba</i>'s on a modified scale. The lambs are very healthy, strong and growing rapidly. The cross, from a mutton point of view, should be a good one, but I have grave doubts, whether the admixture of two breeds, both excellent in their way, is likely to be beneficial. Rams, however, bred on these lines, should make a good cross for the Deccan ewe.</p>
Management.	<p>I allow the flock to graze all day. They are housed at night, when they receive a ration of gram, chopped guinea grass, lucerne, and chaff mixed with a plentiful supply of salt. These experiments are useful, in that, they prove, the Deccan is capable of carrying a sheep far and</p>

in the Deccan.	(J. W. A. Morgan.)	SHEEP.
away superior to the indigenous breed both in wool and mutton-producing qualities, but stock, to be superior to that bred and kept by the ordinary shepherd of the country, must be liberally fed and intelligently crossed, a state of affairs which, I am very much afraid, is beyond our power to bring about, unless higher prices are obtainable for a better class of wool and mutton.		Suitability of Deccan for sheep-breeding.

S. 1332.

G. I. C. P. O.—No. 232 R. & A. D.—15-6-96.—2,100—W. B. G.

All communications regarding THE AGRICULTURAL LEDGER should be addressed to the Editor, Dr. George Watt, Reporter on Economic Products to the Government of India, Calcutta.

The objects of this publication (as already stated) are to gradually develop and perfect our knowledge of Indian Agricultural and Economic questions. Contributions or corrections and additions will therefore be most welcome.

In order to preserve a necessary relation to the various Departments of Government, contributions will be classified and numbered under certain series. Thus, for example, papers on Veterinary subjects will be registered under the Veterinary Series; those on Forestry in the Forest Series. Papers of more direct Agricultural or Industrial interest will be grouped according as the products dealt with belong to the Vegetable or Animal Kingdom. In a like manner, contributions on Mineral and Metallic subjects will be registered under the Mineral Series.

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